



Massachusetts National Guard

Public Affairs

50 Maple Street, Milford, MA 01757

Media Advisory

POINT OF CONTACT:

Maj. Cotton Puryear, MNTF-E Public Affairs

International from US: 011.49.621.730.781.3024

Cell Phone: 044-244-583

E-mail: cotton.puryear@eur.army.mil

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Mass. Units Participate in Transfer of Authority Ceremony in Kosovo

CAMP BONDSTEEL, KOSOVO – Massachusetts National Guard soldiers participated in a transfer of authority ceremony in which Brig. Gen. Douglas B. Earhart took command of the Kosovo Force's Multinational Task Force - East here Wednesday, Dec. 6.

The ceremony recognized Earhart's assumption of command from Brig. Gen. Darren Owens and the transfer of authority of the MNTF-E mission from the 36th Infantry Division to the 29th Infantry Division. Participating on the ceremony were members of the Massachusetts National Guard's 1st Squadron 182nd Cavalry (Melrose, Mass.), 101st Engineer Battalion (Whitinsville, Mass.), and A Company 1st Battalion 181st Infantry (Agawam, Mass.).

The United States is the lead nation for MNTF-E, which also has units from Armenia, Greece, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Ukraine. The American contribution to the task force is comprised of approximately 1,500 soldiers and airmen from 22 different states and Puerto Rico.

The deployment to Kosovo is the second to the Balkans region for the 29th Division. The unit served in Bosnia in 2001, including nearly 200 members of the Massachusetts National Guard.

"The patch of the 29th Division ... can serve as a symbol of hope to the people of Kosovo," Earhart said. "It represents the blue and gray – the North and South – two cultures with divergent perspectives and beliefs. There was a time when it seemed these two groups would never settle their differences..."

Earhart noted that units from Task Force Red Dragon and Task Force Patriot were on opposing sides during battles of the American Civil War. "Today they are united and free, working together towards the common goal of peace in Kosovo ... coming together is not easy; it takes commitment, diligence and patience ... but the reward is great," he said.

Task Force Patriot includes Headquarters Troop (Melrose, Mass.), A Troop (Middleboro, Mass.) and B Troop (Melrose, Mass.) of the Massachusetts National Guard's 1st Squadron 182nd Cavalry.

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The 29th Division and its supporting units are scheduled for a 12-month rotation in Kosovo.



Photo cut-line:

Units from the Virginia National Guard's Task Force Red Dragon (formation on the left with the blue flag) and the Massachusetts National Guard's Task Force Patriot (formation on the right with the gold flag) were on opposing sides during battles of the American Civil War. "Today they are united and free, working together towards a common goal of peace in Kosovo," said Brig. Gen. Douglas B. Earhart, commander of Multinational Task Force - East, during a Transfer of Authority Ceremony at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo Dec. 6. (Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, MNTF-E Public Affairs.)

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Public Affairs Office

Phone: (508) 233-6561

Fax: (508) 233-6585